

02-277

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JUN 17 2003

June 4, 2003

Chairman Michael Powell
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

Chairman Powell:

It is my understanding that the Federal Communications Commission is considering possible changes to its media ownership rules. I urge you to fully disclose your ideas on this extremely important issue and allow hearings and public comment.

Allowing greater concentration and cross-ownership of media may have a profound impact on Americans' access to a wide range of news, information, programming and political commentary. To have a healthy democratic dialogue and participation on major issues, I believe it is important that we have access to a diversity of opinions and information, not a handful of options. Altering media ownership rules could seriously affect vigorous public debate and the marketplace of ideas. Rulemaking of this significance should therefore be open to public comment.

I also believe that, to stay democratic and free, we need to ensure diversity of opinion and the free exchange of ideas. It is imperative that there be the widest possible comment on any proposed rule so the Commission may fairly and impartially evaluate whether it will promote or hinder such diversity.

Once again, I urge you to fully disclose your ideas on this extremely important issue and allow hearings and public comment.

Sincerely,

Robert W. Fitzpatrick